

I 29.79/3:N 42/6
Development Concept Plan In...

Clemson University



3 1604 019 774 787

development concept plan interpretive prospectus

PUBLIC DOCUMENTS
DEPOSITORY ITEM


AUG 21 1990

CLEMSON
LIBRARY

GLADE CREEK NEW RIVER GORGE

NATIONAL RIVER • WEST VIRGINIA





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from
LYRASIS Members and Sloan Foundation

<http://archive.org/details/developmentconce00glade>

development concept plan/interpretive prospectus

june 1990

GLADE CREEK
NEW RIVER GORGE NATIONAL RIVER • WEST VIRGINIA

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR / NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
STUDY AREA	4
INTRODUCTION	4
PLANNING OBJECTIVES FOR THE GLADE CREEK UNIT	4
DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT	7
OVERVIEW	7
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	7
CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT	8
SCENIC RESOURCES	8
RECREATIONAL RESOURCES	9
PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLAN	10
DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN/INTERPRETIVE PROSPECTUS	11
DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTIONS	11
Glade Creek Access Road, Trailhead, and Trail	11
Shoreline Road	11
Mary Ingles Trail	12
Plumley Mountain Trail	12
Uplands Trail	12
INTERPRETATION	12
COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS	15
CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION	16
SUMMARY OF PUBLIC REVIEW	17
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	18
APPENDIX: DESCRIPTION OF PLANNING UNITS	19
PLANNING TEAM	21

ILLUSTRATIONS

Planning Units	3
Glade Creek Study Area	5
Development Concept Plan	13

INTRODUCTION

This development concept plan (DCP) for the Glade Creek planning unit represents another step in the ongoing planning, management, and development process that is making New River Gorge National River a reality. The planning process began with the preparation of the park's *General Management Plan* in 1982, which provided a parkwide overview of resource management strategies and visitor activities. In 1988 the *Park Management and Development Guidelines* was prepared. That document updates the direction established by the general management plan, sets the stage for more detailed planning, and establishes the philosophical framework for site-specific decision making. The *Park Management and Development Guidelines* contains the following statements.

The purposes identified for the park are to

- conserve and interpret outstanding natural, scenic, and historic values and objects in and around New River Gorge, and

- allow resource-based recreation that does not impair resource values.

Also in that document, the following statements summarize the significance of the resources at the national river:

- Size and topographic relief make the gorge an outstanding scenic resource in West Virginia.

- New River Gorge provides some of the best extended season white-water boating in the eastern United States.

- New River is one of the top warm-water stream fishery in the state.

- New River is believed to be the oldest river on the North American continent, and it illustrates "rejuvenated stream" processes.

- The river corridor has resulted in unusual plant and animal diversity.

- New River Gorge contains remains of the mining and transportation of "smokeless" coal, which played a major role in America's industrial history.

After identifying the purpose and significance of the resources, the following series of management objectives – which represent goals that park managers will work toward – were formulated for New River Gorge National River:

- Protect and maintain the natural diversity of plants and animals.

- Sustain the warm-water fishery while protecting natural diversity.

- Preserve outstanding scenic views in and around the gorge – preserve the natural setting in the gorge from I-64 north . . . [and] the rural pastoral scenery south of I-64.

- Encourage visitors to use related interpretive and recreation sites outside the park boundary.

Preserve coal mining, railroading, and other historic resources that best illustrate park significance.

In cooperation with others, achieve and maintain water quality to meet state standards that allow for primary human contact.

Develop a system of land- and water-based recreation opportunities that allows visitors to experience the park's resources to the extent that natural, cultural, and scenic values are not impaired.

The local towns and communities associated with New River are significant resources and integral to the visitor experience; therefore, the National Park Service will work with these communities to help perpetuate their character and vitality.

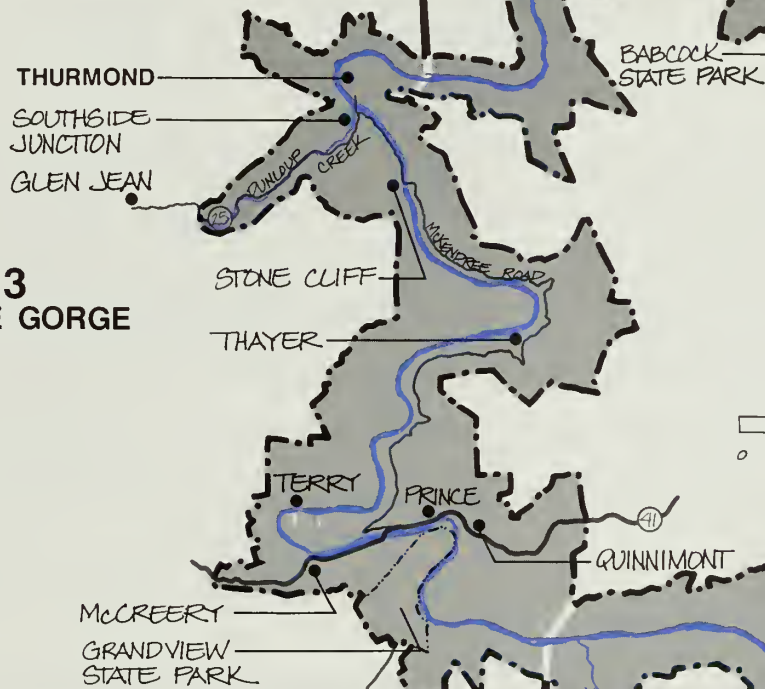
Work with the community to the extent possible to help them maximize economic benefits related to park development without impairing key resources.

For purposes of the current planning efforts at New River Gorge National River, the park has been divided into planning units. A planning unit is a discrete section of the park that has both physical and visitor use characteristics that differentiate it from other sections of the park. At New River Gorge National River there are four such geographic areas that have been designated as planning units. Moving from south to north (following the flow of the river) those units are: Unit 1 – Upper Gorge, Unit 2 – Glade Creek, Unit 3 – Middle Gorge, and Unit 4 – Lower Gorge (see Planning Units and Location maps). The emphasis and significance of each unit is explained in the appendix.

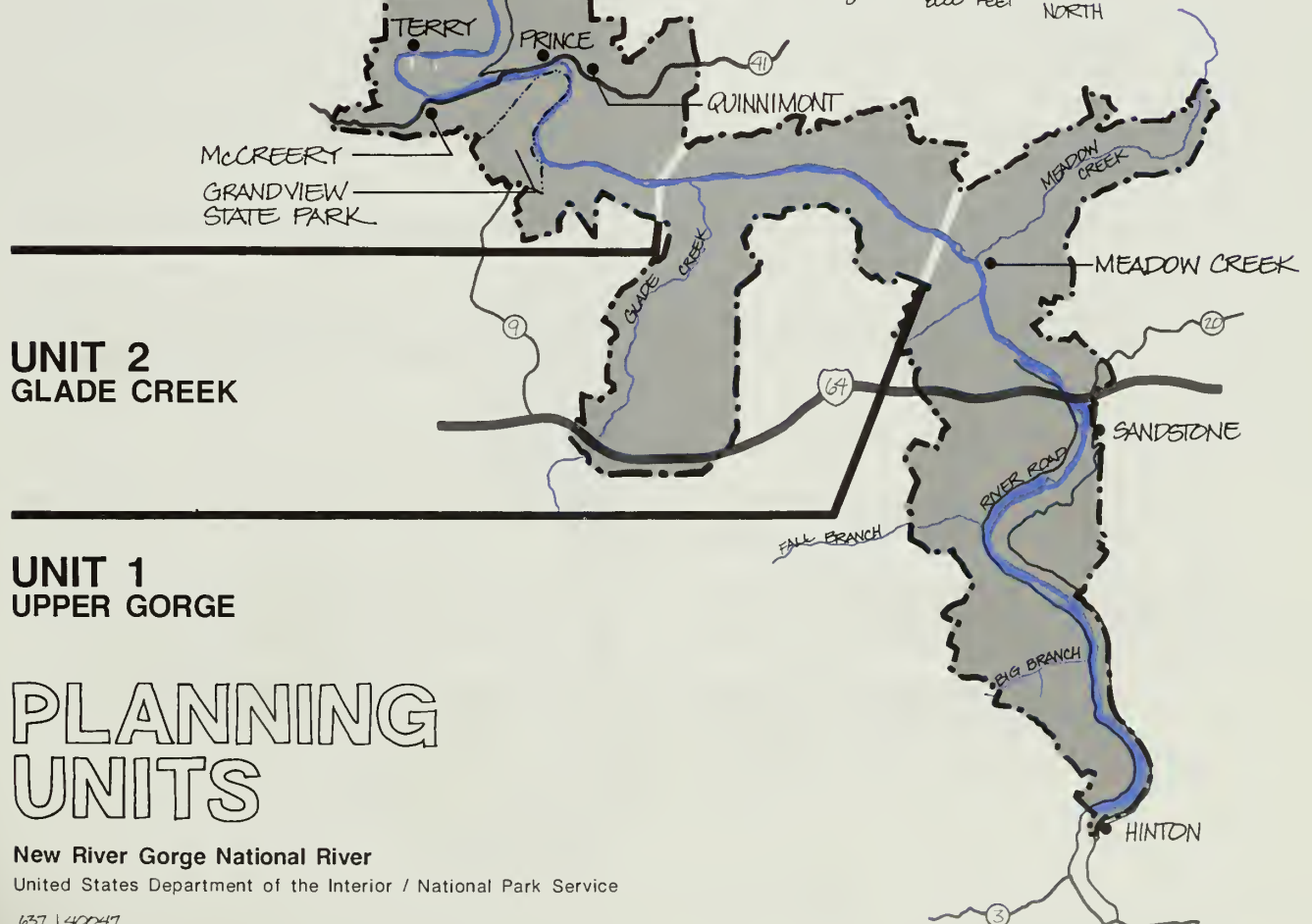
UNIT 4 LOWER GORGE



UNIT 3 MIDDLE GORGE



UNIT 2 GLADE CREEK



UNIT 1 UPPER GORGE

PLANNING UNITS

New River Gorge National River
United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service

637 | 40047
DEC | JULY 89

STUDY AREA

INTRODUCTION

The general area covered by this DCP is the Glade Creek planning unit, which is in the southern half of the park roughly between Grandview State Park and Quinnimont on the northwest and Sewell Branch and Meadow Creek to the southeast.

The specific study area in this DCP is only that portion of the Glade Creek planning unit that is on the south side of the New River (see Study Area map). This is the area commonly referred to as Glade Creek. The watershed for the section of Glade Creek that flows through the park is included within the park boundary.

PLANNING OBJECTIVES FOR THE GLADE CREEK UNIT

Glade Creek is the largest unified tract of relatively undeveloped land within the park; it also contains the only known nonriverine wetland in the area, which is near the head of Kates Branch. The restorative powers of nature are clearly demonstrated in this unit, where evidence of former settlement and logging are barely visible. As such, the Glade Creek planning unit will be managed to protect the wilderness character of this undeveloped section of the park. Hiking, fishing, and exploration will be the featured uses in the unit. Vehicle use will be limited to access points and corridors along the perimeters of the unit. Planning objectives for visitor use and development for the Glade Creek unit will be to

- provide safe access to Glade Creek for trout fishing, hiking, and primitive camping

- improve access to fishing campsites along the New River north of the mouth of Glade Creek

- establish parking areas and provide visitor use information at entry points to roadless areas within the Glade Creek unit

- provide various hiking opportunities for visitors with differing skills and interests within this primitive area of the park

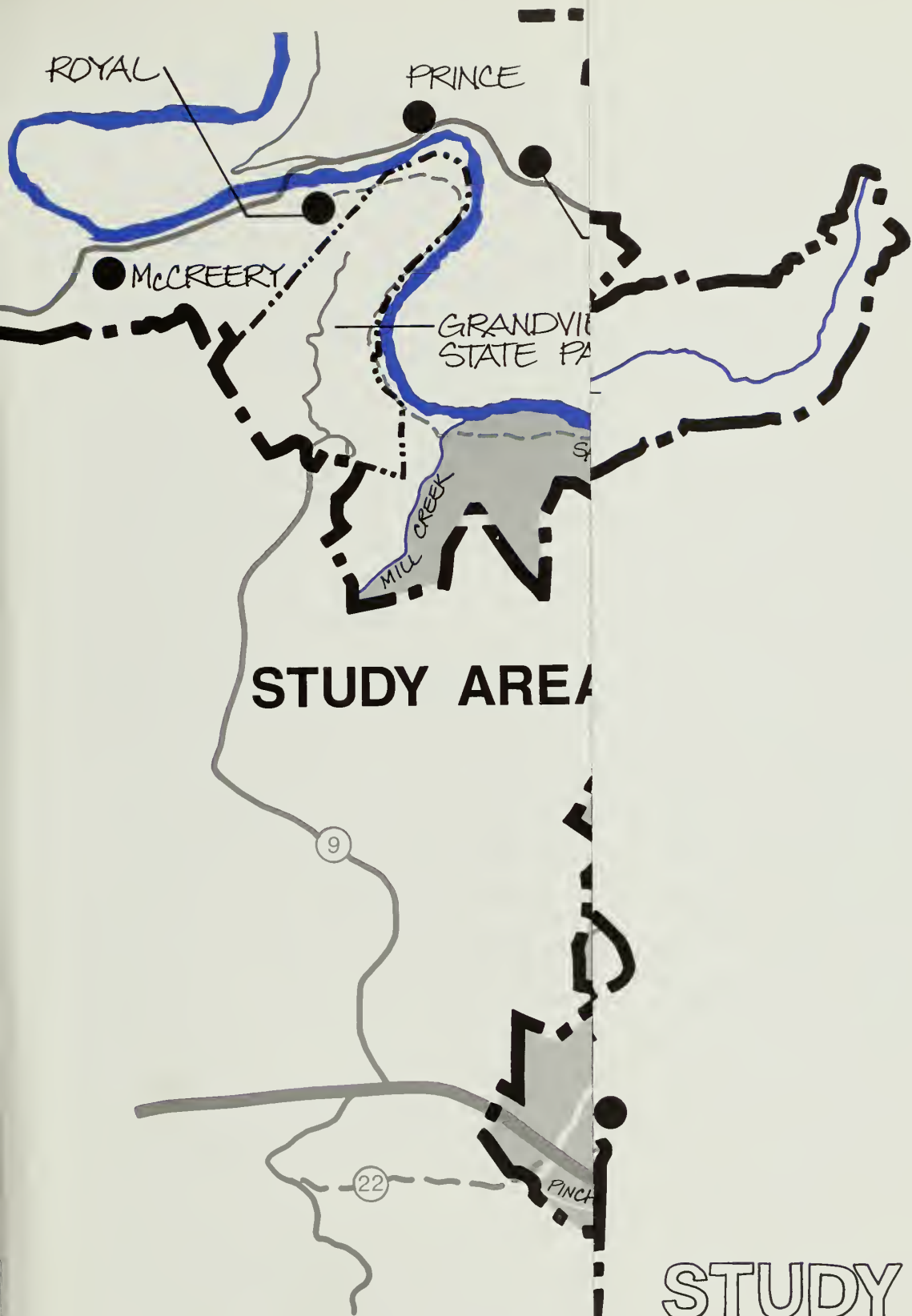
- establish sites for nonmotorized camping at locations that are high in visual quality and near outdoor recreation resources (e.g., swimming holes and fishing spots)

Planning objectives for interpretation of the Glade Creek unit will be to

- inform visitors about what knowledge, equipment, and skills are needed to participate safely and responsibly in desired activities

- inform visitors about the role of the river and gorge as a corridor that allowed passage of plant and animal species from north to south and from south to north

- inform visitors about how industry (logging) changed the gorge landscape and how natural processes are reclaiming it



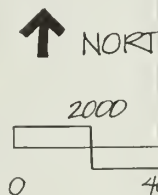
STUDY AREA

STUDY AREA

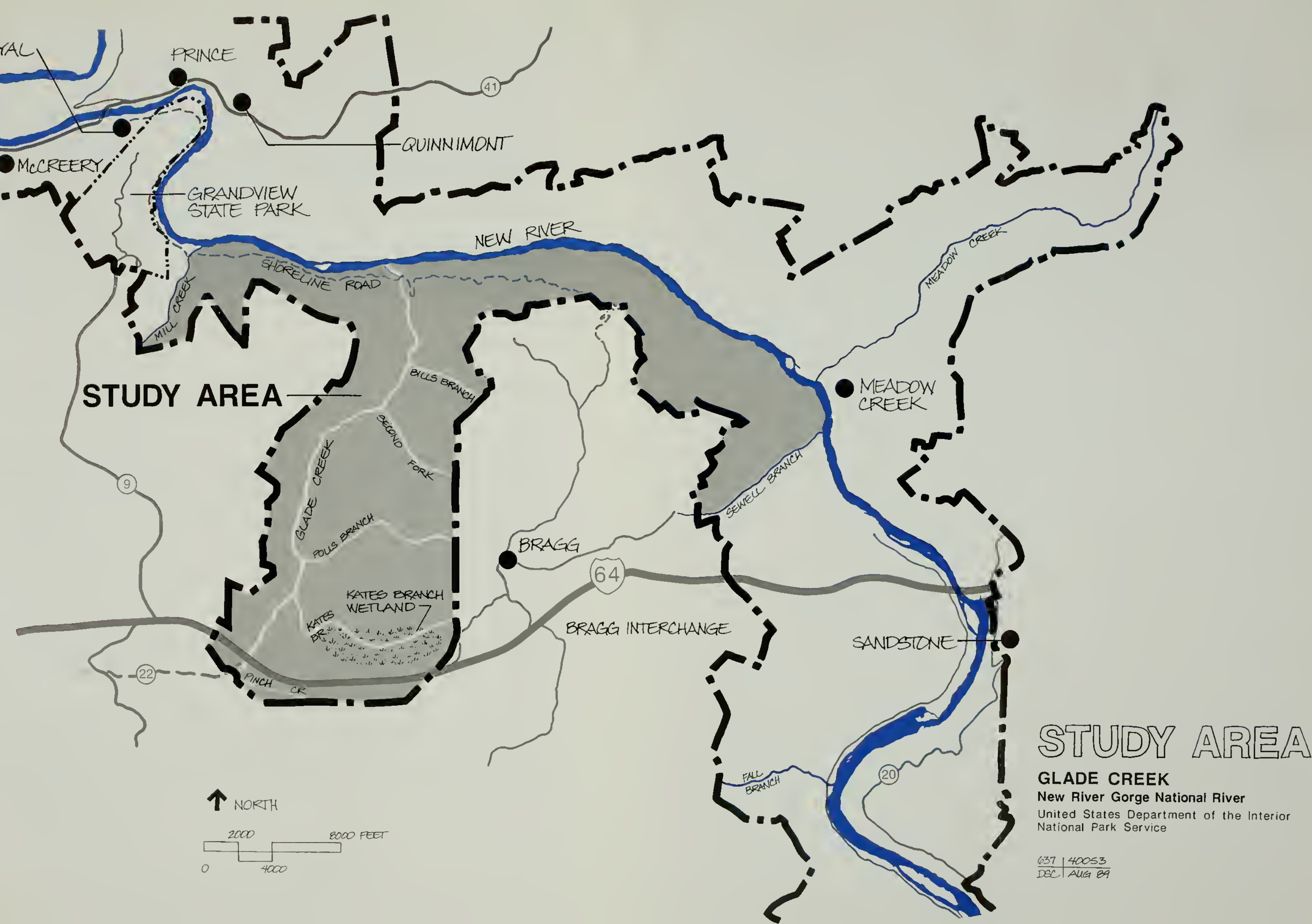
GLADE CREEK

New River Gorge National River

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



637 | 40053
DEC | AUG 89



DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

OVERVIEW

The Glade Creek planning unit consists of approximately 5,000 acres of relatively undeveloped land, with only a few small tracts of private land. It is one of the largest, most accessible natural areas within the New River Gorge National River and is matched only by Babcock State Park. Although signs of former human occupation exist – such as split rail fences, collapsed farm buildings, and a few exotic plant species – the Glade Creek drainage has some of the most pristine and least disturbed natural scenery within the park.

Because a large portion of the Glade Creek unit is beyond the sight and sounds of highways, railroad tracks, and residential development, the area offers tremendous opportunities for solitude, backcountry camping, hiking, and fishing that are unavailable elsewhere within the park. Hunting occurs during the state designated hunting season. Glade Creek is also recognized as an expert-level whitewater stream and is runnable at high water periods.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The forest in the Glade Creek unit is primarily mixed deciduous, consisting of dogwood, redbud, and species of oaks and maple. Historically, Glade Creek was logged rather extensively, and most of the present growth represents second generation.

Kates Branch wetland, in the southeastern corner of the Glade Creek unit, is the only nonriverine wetland known in New River Gorge National River. This wetland is a unique, boggy ecosystem at about 2,600 feet elevation. Kates Branch is a tributary of Glade Creek. In addition to topographic and geologic factors, beavers appear to have contributed to the formation of the wetland. Kates Branch wetland supports many different wetland species including several rare species of plants. The West Virginia Department of Natural Resources located three rare species – two orchids (*Calopogon puchellus* [grass pint orchid] and *Pogonia ophiloglossoides* [rose pogonia]) and one sedge (*Carex styloflexa*). The orchids are found in a few other places in West Virginia; however, Kates Branch wetland supports the only known location of this sedge in West Virginia. All three species are listed on the state's "Species of Special Concern" list.

The Glade Creek drainage provides habitat for a variety of wildlife, such as raccoons, beavers, wild turkeys, deer, and bear. It provides good woodland habitat for many different bird species, such as warblers, woodpeckers, thrushes, and owls. According to informal consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, there are no known threatened or endangered species or critical habitats.

Glade Creek flows north for 18.1 miles before it reaches the New River near the abandoned community of Hamlet. About 6 miles of Glade Creek are in the boundary of New River Gorge National River. The creek drains approximately 63.3 square miles and falls about 119.2 feet per mile. Within the national river boundary the creek flows through a steep canyon that ranges from 700 to 1,000 feet deep and drops approximately 1,600 feet. Glade Creek is considered one of the best trout streams in southern West Virginia by the West Virginia State Department of Natural Resources. A riverine wetland is associated with the New River and its tributaries.

The creek is stocked on a "put and take" basis (once in February, once every two weeks from March through May, and twice in October) with adult brook, rainbow, and brown trout. Glade Creek is presently stocked from below Pools Branch to a point 10 miles upstream at West Virginia Secondary Route 27. Pinch Creek is stocked one time in April in a 1-mile section at West Virginia Secondary Route 27. Fingerling brown trout have been stocked in lower Glade Creek and Pinch Creek on a put-grow-take basis. The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources has documented that a "wild" carry-over type trout fishery has been established from these stockings.

CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

The logging industry began to flourish in West Virginia in the 1880s. The forest of the New River Gorge and surrounding plateaus were extensively logged during the heyday of the lumber industry. This heavily wooded region now consists entirely of second-growth timber. A 1916 report by the West Virginia Geological Survey states that Raleigh County (which encompasses Glade Creek) had one of the heaviest stands of timber in the state.

Two towns, Glade and Hamlet (which no longer exist), developed along the banks of New River on opposite sides and were connected by a railroad bridge. The towns functioned as one town, with the difference being that Glade was in Fayette County and Hamlet was in Raleigh County. Sawmills were built at both locations, and in 1908 a narrow gauge iron-rail steam railroad was built from New River up Glade Creek into the heart of the timber stands. Temporary lumber camps were set up in the woods, then dismantled and moved once an area was sawed out. By the end of the 1920s most of the timber had been cut and the lumber industry in New River had been stopped. Evidence of logging camps and other activities from the late 19th and early 20th century that will be worthy of preservation will most likely be found.

In an 1981 survey¹ of the general patterns of archeological sites within the park, several sites were identified that are within the study area. There are 20 prehistoric archeological sites within the park near or above Kates and Polls branches and the mouth of Glade Creek. Five other sites were found further upstream along the New River, including limited and multiactivity campsites on open ground and at rock-shelters. These sites range from about 20 feet to at least 375 feet across and, in age, from the Early Archaic to the Late Woodland (ca. 9000 B.C. to AD 1500). Although none of these sites have been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places, two sites of special significance were identified – one along Kates Branch and another along a tributary of Polls Branch. The 1981 survey was designed only to reveal the general patterning of sites in the park and not to find all the sites or fully test the sites found; it is therefore quite probable that many more sites are present than were discovered in that survey and many more sites than those identified in the general survey will be eligible for the national register.

SCENIC RESOURCES

The Glade Creek drainage offers visitors some of the least developed and least disturbed natural scenery within the New River Gorge National River. It also offers a smaller scale of riparian environment than along the New River.

¹ The information in this paragraph was taken from *A Cultural Research Project, New River Gorge National River, West Virginia* by David Fuerst (1981).

RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

On the alignment that once served the narrow gauge railroad for the lumber operation, the Glade Creek Trail (about 6 miles long) has been established. This trail provides scenic views of the creek and surrounding valley and opportunities for hikers, photographers, hunters, and fishermen to find solitude and experience a wild environment within New River Gorge National River, and it offers additional opportunities for visitors who want access to backcountry camping areas. The trail begins at the confluence of Glade and Pinch creeks, and for the first 3 miles runs along the east side of Glade Creek. The trail then crosses the creek by way of a ford and follows along the west side of the creek for the last 3 miles before reaching the New River. Scenic views of the creek, small waterfalls, and tributaries draining into Glade Creek occur periodically along the trail.

The unmaintained four-wheel-drive Shoreline Road intersects the Glade Creek trail just south of the New River. This road originates near Prince, follows an old railroad bench along the Raleigh County side of New River, and terminates at the derelict bridge just south of the mouth of Glade Creek. Although passable by two-wheel-drive vehicles from Prince to Mill Creek, Shoreline Road requires four-wheel-drive vehicles from Mill Creek to the mouth of Glade Creek.

Hunting is a popular activity in the Glade Creek area. According to New River Gorge park staff, deer hunting (from fall through early winter) is most popular. Wild turkey hunting is second in popularity with two separate seasons – fall and spring. Bear hunting has not occurred in the area during the recent past due to low bear population. However, this could change in the future as the population is growing according to the state Department of Natural Resources. Small mammals such as fox and raccoon are also hunted year-round.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLAN

The Glade Creek area was designated as a primitive area in the 1982 *General Management Plan*, the intent being to eliminate motorized access to sites within the unit and provide a place for visitors to experience solitude – without modern conveniences and machine-made noise.

However, motorized access still exists into the Glade Creek area. The principal current and traditional uses within the study area are trout fishing in Glade Creek and warm-water fishing in the New River. The latter activity usually means four-wheel-drive vehicle access to fishing campsites by way of Shoreline Road, the existing jeep road from Royal near the Prince Bridge that parallels the New River. The road is in deplorable condition – with mud holes stretching for miles even during dry weather. This condition is exacerbated as vehicles continue to use the road, creating more ruts in the clay soil and enlarging the area of impact.

Some hiking also occurs within the area, and the public has expressed the desire to have more hiking opportunities. Both the condition of the Shoreline Road and the incompatibility of vehicles and hikers using the same route make this road less than ideal for hiking. Because Shoreline Road is the most accessible corridor for the proposed Mary Ingles Trail through this section of the park, it was necessary to accommodate both hikers and vehicles along this 2.4-mile segment. However, it may be possible at some future time to reroute this short section of the Mary Ingles Trail away from the road and eliminate this use conflict.

Note: Public Law 100-534 (October 26, 1988) authorized a Glade Creek visitor facility; this facility will be addressed in a later planning study. For the purposes of this DCP, however, it is assumed that this facility will someday become a reality and that its construction will not seriously affect any of the proposals being made for this DCP.

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN/INTERPRETIVE PROSPECTUS

This plan, the details of which are listed below and shown on the following Development Concept Plan map, is based on the concept that existing access and use patterns are appropriate recreational use for portions of Glade Creek and that improvements could be made to enhance the quality of those activities. Both vehicle-supported uses – such as river fishing, family camping, and picnicking along the New River – and backcountry uses including hiking, backpacking, and trout fishing will be accommodated within the interior of the unit.

Under this plan the proposed Mary Ingles Trail and the Glade Creek Trail will be moderate-use trails and the Plumley Mountain and Uplands trails will be low-use trails (see Development Concept Plan map).

The intent of the 1982 *General Management Plan* was to close Shoreline Road from Mill Creek to Glade Creek to keep the area as a natural area. However, due to the long-standing traditional use of this road by fishermen, improvement of this road is proposed in this plan. The 1982 plan also recommended 20 walk-in/boat-in primitive campsites near the mouth of Glade Creek. In the past seven years, this proposal has also been reconsidered, and only five walk-in and five drive-in campsites are currently being recommended in that area. It was felt that, based on current use in the park, only 10 campsites (a mix of walk-in and drive-in) were needed to serve the needs of the park visitors. These proposals are revisions to the 1982 plan, and their impacts were assessed in the "Environmental Consequences" section of the September 1989 *Draft Development Concept Plan/Environmental Assessment*.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTIONS

Glade Creek Access Road, Trailhead, and Trail

Retain gravel road (Route 22) for trailhead access at south end of unit

Develop trailhead with parking for 10 cars at confluence of Glade and Pinch creeks; install floodproof vault toilet at trailhead

Improve the existing Glade Creek Trail corridor (the old railroad spur) with drainage devices; revegetate with native vegetation where necessary

Construct footbridge to facilitate stream crossing during periods of high water (design to allow safe passage of kayaks underneath)

Restrict access to I-64 bridge service road to inspectors only

Establish a trailhead and parking for 10 cars at the mouth of Glade Creek just south of the New River; install a floodproof vault toilet at the trailhead

Shoreline Road

Improve road from Royal to mouth of Glade Creek for vehicle access

Negotiate with West Virginia Department of Highways and CSX Transportation Corporation to install a crossing gate or warning light at the crossing at Royal

Repair the Mill Creek bridge for vehicle traffic (one lane)

Establish five drive-in campsites along the road near the mouth of Glade Creek; install floodproof vault toilet

Mary Ingles Trail

Establish Mary Ingles Trail, with hiking allowed on the entire trail and vehicles and bicycles permitted only on the section from Royal to Glade Creek

Repair old Glade Creek bridge at the mouth of Glade Creek to allow pedestrian access only (maintenance vehicle access may be required)

Establish five walk-in campsites along the trail east of Glade Creek and install floodproof pit or composting toilets

Plumley Mountain Trail

Establish a trailhead for five vehicles within the park boundary; gate the road and convert to hiking/horse trail

Uplands Trail

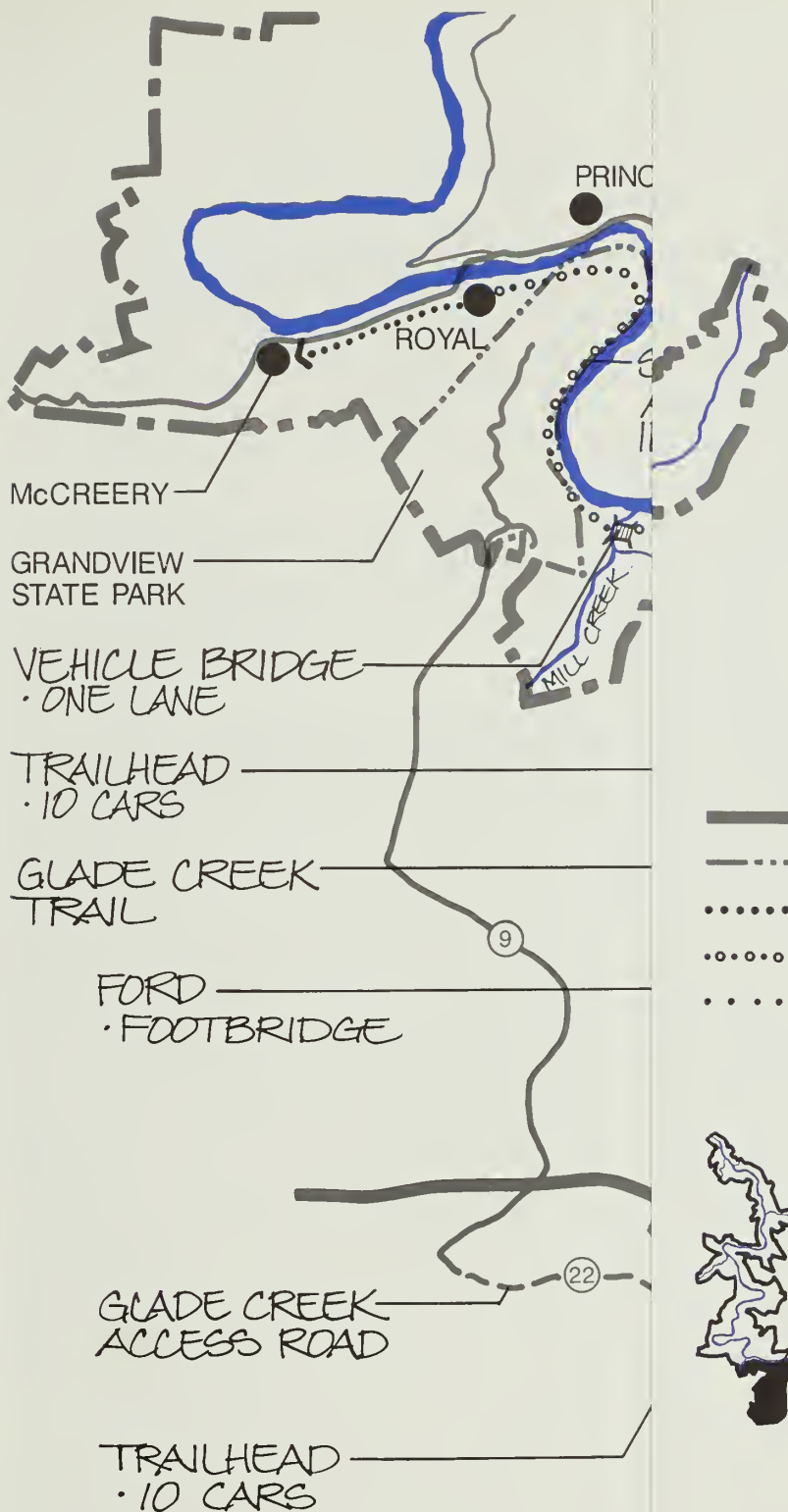
Establish trailhead for five vehicles within park boundary west of Bragg

Establish a trail system using portions of existing jeep roads for hiking and horseback riding only

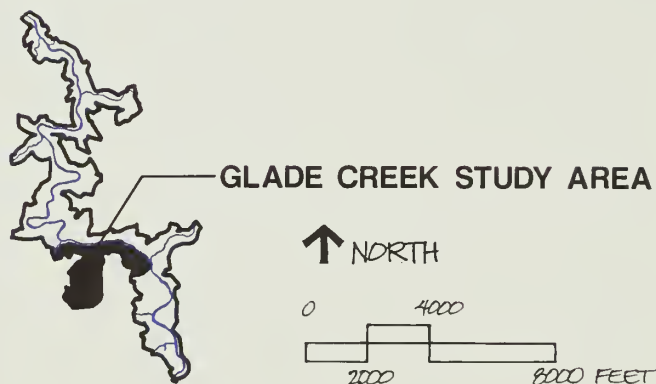
INTERPRETATION

In keeping with the more primitive area theme of this unit, interpretive facilities in the Glade Creek study area will be limited to trailhead locations where wayside panels will inform visitors about the skills and equipment that are useful for safe and responsible participation in activities such as camping, hiking, and fishing.

Additional interpretive information and services will be through published material that will be available throughout the park at visitor contact facilities and through scheduled ranger-led on-site programs. These materials will focus on providing information about (1) the role of the river and gorge as a corridor that allowed the passage of plant and animal species from north to south and from south to north, and (2) how industry (logging) changed the gorge landscape and natural processes are reclaiming it.



- ■ — Park Boundary
- · - · - State Park Boundary
- Moderate-use Trail
- · · · · Road/Moderate-use Trail
- · · · · Low-use Trail



Low-use trails are associated with primitive users who prefer a backcountry experience. They are narrow (wide enough for one person) and lack structures such as bridges, shelters, or interpretive signs.

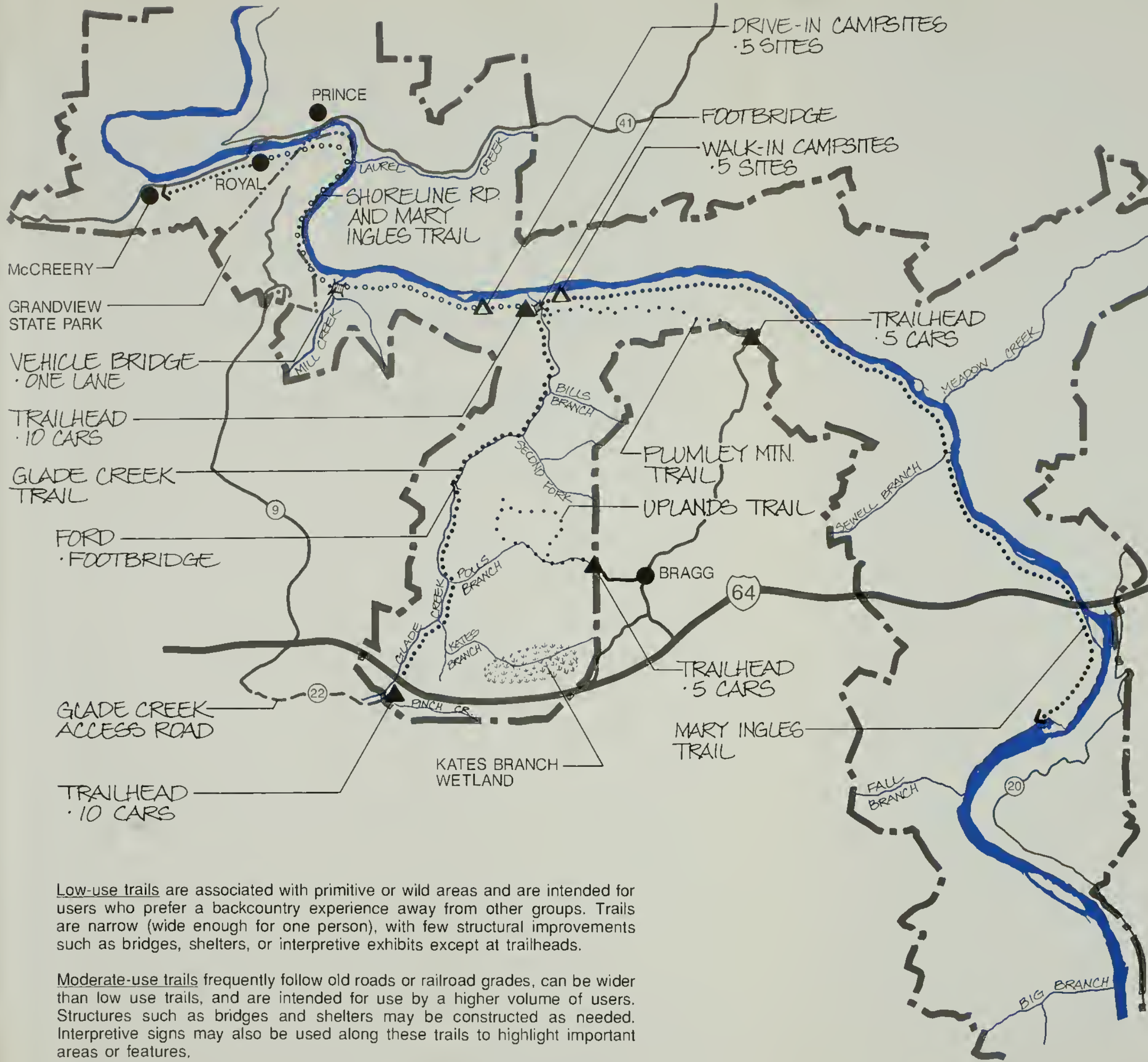
Moderate-use trails frequently follow old roads and are intended for day hikers. Structures such as bridges and shelters are present. Interpretive signs may also be used along these areas or features.

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN

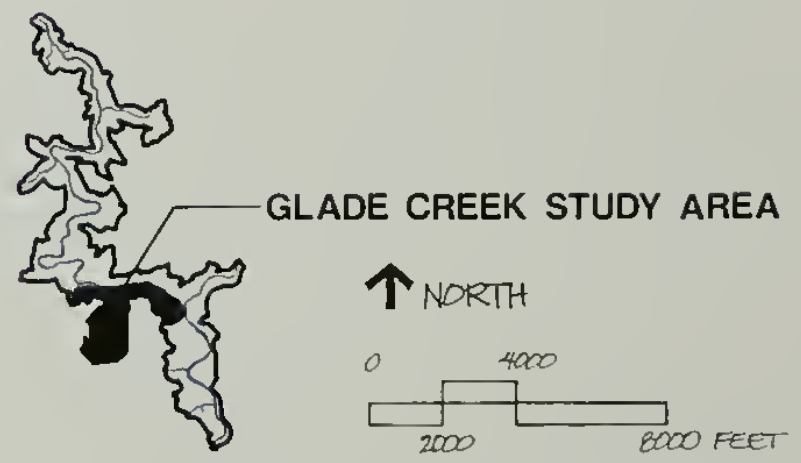
GLADE CREEK

New River Gorge National River
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

637 | 40048A
DEC | FEB 90



- Park Boundary
- - - State Park Boundary
- Moderate-use Trail
- Road/Moderate-use Trail
- Low-use Trail



Low-use trails are associated with primitive or wild areas and are intended for users who prefer a backcountry experience away from other groups. Trails are narrow (wide enough for one person), with few structural improvements such as bridges, shelters, or interpretive exhibits except at trailheads.

Moderate-use trails frequently follow old roads or railroad grades, can be wider than low use trails, and are intended for use by a higher volume of users. Structures such as bridges and shelters may be constructed as needed. Interpretive signs may also be used along these trails to highlight important areas or features.

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN

GLADE CREEK

New River Gorge National River
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

The trailheads and campsites proposed in this DCP are identified as excepted actions in the floodplain under NPS "Final Procedures for implementing Executive Order 11988 and Executive Order 11990" (45 *Federal Register* 35916 May 28, 1980, as revised by *Federal Register* #163 36718 August 23, 1982). Sanitary facilities are also acceptable in a floodplain provided that floodproofing is a design and construction consideration.

Archeological evaluation of areas that will incur ground disturbance will be required prior to construction.

For construction activities along New River or Glade, Mill , or Pinch creeks that require soil disturbance such as construction of parking areas, campsite development, and road repair, the National Park Service must submit a sediment and erosion control plan to the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources--Water Resources Division for approval prior to construction.

A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit may be required to reconstruct the bridges at Mill Creek and Glade Creek. Consultation about the necessity of the permit must occur between the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Corps of Engineers.

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

FEDERAL AGENCIES

Environmental Protection Agency

Federal Emergency Management Agency

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

U.S. Soil Conservation Service

STATE AGENCIES

West Virginia Department of Natural Resources

Division of Environmental Standards

Division of Sediment Control

Division of Water Resources

Division of Wildlife Resources

Natural Heritage Program

West Virginia State Parks

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC REVIEW

During December 1989 the *Draft Development Concept Plan/Environmental Assessment* was made available for public review and comment. The public response to that opportunity to comment is summarized below.

A total of 12 written responses were received within the 30 day review period from the following respondents:

- CSX Transportation Corporation – one
- State of West Virginia, Division of Culture and History, State Historic Preservation Officer – one
- State of West Virginia, Department of Natural Resources – one
- Huntington Tri-State Audubon Society – one
- State senator (West Virginia) – one
- private citizens – seven

CSX Transportation Corporation ensured their cooperation with the State Department of Transportation regarding improvements to the rail crossing at Royal.

The state historic preservation officer expressed concern that formal determination of the significance of former towns of Glade and Hamlet, and the old bridge over Glade Creek had not been made.

The West Virginia Department of Natural Resources (WVDNR) expressed concern that proposed road, trail, and campsite improvements could negatively affect native deer, bear, and turkey populations. They further requested that no ATV or vehicular access be allowed to remote areas, and that only existing trails be upgraded and seeded as turkey/grouse brood range. If new trails/roads are needed, WVDNR should be involved in review and coordination. They also mentioned that consideration should be given to upgrading the road(trail) along Glade Creek to provide administrative only access for a small truck to stock trout.

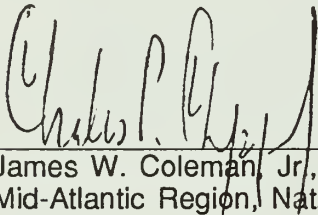
The majority of respondents who voiced a preference favored alternative two over the preferred alternative, stating the desire to limit auto access and to keep the area as natural as possible.

Two respondents asked the Park Service to be sure the proposed pedestrian bridges over Glade Creek be high enough to allow kayaks to pass underneath (during those stream flow conditions when it is possible to run Glade Creek).

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The final plan as described in the 1990 *Development Concept Plan/Interpretive Prospectus, Glade Creek, New River Gorge National River*, does not constitute a major federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment as defined in section 102 (2) (c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (PL 91-190, 83 Stat. 853). Therefore, the National Park Service will not prepare an environmental impact statement for the development concept plan.

Compliance with section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, on the approved 1982 *General Management Plan* was initiated in accordance with the September 1981 programmatic memorandum of agreement (PMOA) between the National Park Service, the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, pursuant to 36 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 800. Subsequent consultation with the West Virginia state historic preservation officer and the Advisory Council has occurred on changes proposed in the *Draft Development Concept Plan*.



James W. Coleman, Jr., Regional Director
Mid-Atlantic Region, National Park Service

APR 13 1990

Date

APPENDIX: DESCRIPTION OF PLANNING UNITS

PLANNING UNITS

A planning unit is a section of the park that has both physical and visitor use characteristics that differentiate it from other sections of the park. At New River Gorge National River four such geographic areas/planning units have been designated. Division of the park into planning units is only for planning purposes – it makes it easier to visualize and comprehend this complex landscape and ensures that decisions about any one site are made in relation to possible effects on neighboring sites. Moving from south to north (following the flow of the river) the units are the Upper Gorge unit, the Glade Creek unit, the Middle Gorge unit, and the Lower Gorge unit.

Each of the four planning units has its own unique qualities and significance that differentiate it from the other units. In addition, each unit has been given a management and use emphasis that relates to its uniqueness.

Upper Gorge Unit

Significance. This southernmost unit of the park is characterized by an agricultural landscape and flatwater that is punctuated by two scenic waterfalls and the mountain community of Hinton. The excellent warm-water fishery on this part of the river is some of the best in the state. Unusual plant and animal diversity, including at least five species of plants that are considered rare in the state, and unique river-rock riparian habitat are in the Upper Gorge Unit.

Emphasis. Because the park is crossed by Interstate 64 in this unit, highway travelers will be introduced to the national river in much the same way that the Canyon Rim contact facility serves visitors on US 19 to the north. More casual river and shoreline recreation, such as fishing, floating, picnicking, and environmental education, will be emphasized.

Glade Creek Unit

The significance and emphasis of this unit are described in the main body of this document.

Middle Gorge Unit

Significance. The Middle Gorge unit has the greatest variety of accessible natural and historical features and recreational sites. Access is by road and trail corridors that extend the entire length of the unit on opposite sides of the river.

Emphasis. Site-specific interpretation and more contemplative recreation will be emphasized in this unit. Thurmond and McCreery could serve as principle orientation points at either end of the unit – Thurmond focusing on railroading and transportation stories and McCreery addressing recreation opportunities and natural history themes. Improvements at river access points will upgrade facilities to a higher standard.

Lower Gorge Unit

Significance. This unit is the deepest section of the gorge, characterized by steep slopes and sheer drop-offs from the escarpment that runs along the rim. The narrow river corridor drops significantly in elevation over a short distance, creating many rapids. No active settlements remain in this section of the park, although the unit does contain remains of important historic sites at Sewell, Kaymoor, and Nuttallburg. The natural environment has all but reclaimed most of the land within the unit. River runners are the predominant users of this portion of the gorge. Local fishermen and hunters continue to use this area much as they did before the park was established. The rock

outcrops along the rim provide dramatic scenic viewing opportunities for more passive visitors and rock climbing challenges for the more adventurous visitor. Road access to the river is limited to each end of the unit and at Cunard.

Emphasis. This unit of the park is one of dramatic contrasts in both landscape and visitor experience. On the rim, the emphasis will be to introduce travelers to the New River Gorge. At the other extreme – 1,000 feet below on the river – park users raft or kayak the challenging class V rapids. Opportunities will be offered for relaxed picnicking, taking short hikes on loop trails, attending environmental education programs, or participating in more challenging activities such as rock climbing along the "Endless Wall." Most land-based development and destination activity will be at sites on or near the rim. The river shoreline will be managed as a more primitive area with fewer modern conveniences.

PLANNING TEAM

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DENVER SERVICE CENTER

Dennis Piper, Team Captain, Landscape Architect/Planner
Mary Riddle, Natural Resource Specialist
Linda Romola, Cultural Resource Specialist

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, HARPERS FERRY CENTER

Linda Finn, Interpretive Planner

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, NEW RIVER GORGE NATIONAL RIVER

Joe Kennedy, Superintendent
Henry Law, Assistant Superintendent
Andy Kardos, Chief of Interpretation
Bill Hofmeyer, South District Interpreter
Leon Clifford, Park Planner, Denver Service Center
Meg Weesner, Resource Management Specialist



As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural and cultural resources. This includes fostering wise use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The department also promotes the goals of the Take Pride in America campaign by encouraging stewardship and citizen responsibility for the public lands and promoting citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

Publication services were provided by the graphics and editorial staffs of the Denver Service Center.
NPS D-36A June 1990

